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SPRING 2014

Find. Fix. Feather.

These three words sum up the notions behind *Seven Days'* new quarterly supplement about home, design and real estate. If you're in the market to buy, sell, make a move or spruce up your decor — or even if you just like to look — this inaugural issue will give you something to contemplate.

You'll find a new Nest tucked inside the pages of *Seven Days* each spring, summer, fall and winter. Enjoy.



ON THE COVER

Residence in Addison, Vt.
By Selin + Selin Architecture
Photo Courtesy of Susan Thore

Stephen and Judith Selin took curvy paths to their current partnership in Selin + Selin Architecture. Stephen was initially trained as a structural engineer and designed high-rises and airports, after earning an architecture degree, he became a partner at Burlington-based TruettCullum Architects. Judith is a former high-school math teacher who went on to hone her talents in design and illustration. Five or more years ago, the husband-and-wife team launched a home-based practice together in the home. Now, they work and live in a restored, century-old primary on Elder Road that "was about to fall down when we took it over," says Judith.

Their quarters are made more idyllic — and aiming for LEED Platinum — but still preserve the original building's simple, classic design. And that speaks to the Selin's architectural philosophy: "Balance" kind of covers everything," Stephen remarks. "We feel strongly about design, proportion and scale and the way a building works — from the functionality to the rhythm to sustainability... The place should look like it belongs there."

Judging from the photographs on the Selin's website of both residential and commercial projects, "belonging" means retaining a link to the past — think classical columns, vaulted ceilings, and moldings to soften the harder edges of a room. "It comes back to the 18th century, when buildings were thoughtfully built," Stephen says. Adds Judith, "There's more of a focus on arts and crafts — when people weren't so rushed, they might add a stained-glass window."

Not all of their buildings look the same, of course, but a "little bit authentic" does emerge in the work. Though they've had clients from around the world, the bulk of their projects are right here in Vermont. Local residents have surely noticed, say, the Waterfront Information Center in Burlington, the Stillbarn Vineyard Winery quarters, and those little timber-framed, veritable bus-passenger shelters around Chittenden County. Residents may find urban renovations to surprising rural abodes.

With Selin + Selin, clients get another sense of balance — male and female perspective — in the architectural process that Judith calls a "journey." Building a new or renovating a home can be stressful, she says, but the collaboration is part of what keeps it fun. ☐



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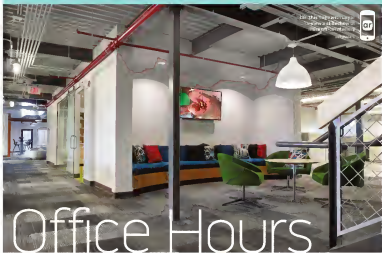
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THE IDEA OF FOUR WALLS, A DOOR AND
A PRIVATE OFFICE IS A THING OF THE PAST.

CHRISTINE BURDICK



*Designer Christine Burdick
goes to work*

BY KEN PICARD



Christine Burdick and Ken Picard



TOP: Young Green Mountain LLC, Waterbury
RIGHT: Ken & Jerry's/Torrey Lake, Waterbury



COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Last year, when Ben & Jerry's executives decided to revamp the look and feel of their employee workspaces and public areas, they sought an aesthetic update that didn't cast aside the whimsical playfulness of one of Vermont's most iconic brands. So they turned to Burlington interior designer Christine Burdick.

Burdick rose to the ice cream maker's challenge of retaining Ben & Jerry's hip, youthful and brightly colored aesthetic — without mandating office walls with peace signs and helicopters.

She did retain the children's slide in the lobby of Ben & Jerry's South Burlington corporate headquarters. And, rather than installing traditional employee meal slots, Burdick brought in actual rural milkshakes and painted them bright colors. "When you see them," she says, "it reads Ben & Jerry's."

Ellen Krosky, Ben & Jerry's creative director, says Burdick totally nailed it.

"Christine gets our brand and she gets us," Krosky says. "Ultimately, the company's St. Albans facility — our first look on the map — is a house in Passaic, New Jersey, to looking like what it should be — a Ben & Jerry's place of work, where people feel warm and welcome."

Burdick says she wouldn't attempt these same rural milkshakes in Manhattan — a workplace she helped redesign several years ago — despite the insurance company's dup Vermont roots.

"We really like to understand our clients — what their goals are, what their principles are, who their employees are and how they attract and retain employees," Burdick explains. "It's easy to set up an office these days. But to be able to attract and retain really good talent in Vermont can be tricky. And their space has to reflect that."

Christine Burdick Design is a two-woman operation run out of a one-room, exposed brick studio in downtown Burlington. Despite

the firm's modest size, its client list reads like a who's who of Vermont companies and organizations. Dealer cars, Keating Green Mountain, Braggier's Bagels, Merchants Bank and Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, to name a few. Currently, Burdick is under contract with Champlain College to design the interior of its new Center for Communication and Creative Media.

Burdick also helps much smaller outfits on modest budgets re-envision their looks. Tyler Barnes, owner of Crossfit Threshold Training, says he hired Burdick recently to redesign his business' 1,000-square-foot office and fitness studio in South Burlington.

Barnes says he met with many other designers before choosing Burdick. Barnes had strong design concepts but wasn't very flexible with their vision, he recalls. Others were all about practicality but lacked any vision. Burdick, he says, offered "the perfect mix" of both worlds.

"Trying it all together and having one unifying design language was really important to us and was really hard," Barnes adds. "That's why we went to Christine."

Burdick, a 35-year-old Colchester native, studied interior design at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and worked with several big-city design firms before returning to Vermont in 2000. She spent six years employed at local architectural firms until the construction market tanked and interior design work dried up.

After applying for jobs with virtually every architectural and

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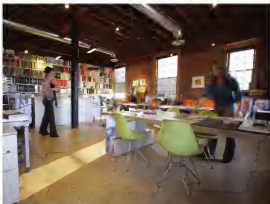
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Christine Burdick
and Karlin Morgan
in their Burlington
office

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design firm in the state and getting very a table, Burdick recalls, "I light had went off in my head." As she explains, she noticed a "missing link" in Vermont's design community: Small architectural firms didn't have enough work to justify keeping a full-time interior designer on staff. Yet they all had trouble finding interior designers who specialized in commercial and institutional designs.

Burdick stepped in to fill that niche. In 2008, she launched her own company in her basement, then spent six months working out of an old Colchester schoolhouse before relocating to her current quarters in Burlington's Main Street. Since then, the firm has grown to employ as many as five, though it is now just Burdick and

several designer Karlin Morgan, 28. Burdick also specializes in LEED — or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — interiors for green buildings.

What's the biggest change she's seen since becoming an interior designer 15 years ago?

"The office is changing. The idea of four walls, a door and a private office is a thing of the past," Burdick says. "Now, we're designing places where people can park and call their own, but also have a lot of shared spaces."

Open floor plans present unique challenges, she notes, such as loud acoustics and the need for "breakout spaces" where employees can meet in small groups without disturbing others. Open offices also need isolated

workstations where employees need "acoustic" — or part-time, temporary and contracted staff — can concentrate undisturbed. To that end, Burdick often recommends installing so-called "phone booths" workspaces where employees can make sensitive or confidential calls.

Unlike most designers, who mount their design swatches on boards, Burdick keeps hers in flat storage boxes for easier storage, her Burlington studio is filled with them. And, as she quickly discovered, the way up with one of these boxes makes her instantly popular on many projects.

"You show up at a construction site," she explains, "and everyone thinks they're doing nice." ☐

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Riding the Upcycle

Jeremy Smith and Adelle Lawrence find a clientele eager for their new-old furniture

BY KEN FICARD

Most days, Jeremy Smith and his wife, Adelle Lawrence, can't keep their newly made furniture on the showroom floor of their Burlington store, Barge Canal Market. That's not because they lack space in their 3,600-square-foot shop on Pine Street in Burlington's South End. It's because customers snap up their "upcycled" furniture pieces, which Smith and Lawrence build by hand from salvaged and reclaimed materials.

Indeed, on a reporter's recent visit to Barge Canal Market—the name appears in white block letters across the front of the green warehouse—the two had just four new pieces on hand amid the many antiques they sell. Three of them already bore "BCCM" tags.

"The industrial look is very popular right now, with the metal and rich reclaimed timber," Smith says, running his hand across a long, polished wooden table. "This is really, really popular."

"Upcycled" furniture—the term refers to the conversion of waste material into new products of higher environmental or monetary value—is a growing trend, both in Vermont and nationally. In recent years, various home-improvement stores and DIY magazines have extolled the virtues of repurposing old commercial, industrial and agricultural objects into hip, stylish home furnishings. What's unique about the furniture of BCM Original Designs is that Smith and Lawrence's pieces won't break the bank for most consumers, even when they're custom made.

For example, BCM's upcycled table was made from farm planks salvaged from a demolished barn in Finsburg. Smith and Lawrence placed the wood but left some of its weathered texture and coloring to retain its rural character. They then sealed it, laid down a coat of oil and



PHOTO TOP: JAMES G. HARRIS FOR NEST; BOTTOM: JAMES G. HARRIS FOR NEST

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SEE PAGE 8

SMITH and Lawrence
found a clientele
eager for their
new-old furniture

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Riding the Upcycle

all-natural finish, and mounted the table-top on legs assembled from salvaged plumbing pipes. That piece sold for just \$150. Seven other desks made from salvaged wood and old plumbing sold for \$300 apiece.

"They're pretty remarkable, especially compared to the 'ligger stores,'" Smith says.

Smith and Lawrence bought Range Canal Market in February 2012. What was then a thrift shop and second-hand bookstore has slowly morphed into a cafe/bar and showroom for their one-of-

describes how he decides what to build.

"I don't know I take a good thing and make it an awesome thing," he says with a smile. His favorite project was a two-section bar/staircase built for a house, made from old door panels mounted on cast-iron. Customers often came into the store with a photo or just an idea for a piece and said if he can build it, Smith says. Most of the time, he can.

Smith, 28, a Vermont native, graduated from Colchester High School, then studied architectural technology at the State University of New York at Delhi, just south of Oswego, NY. He graduated from SUNY Delhi in 2003 assuming he'd get a job in an architectural firm doing computer-aided design. But he soon realized that "being a CAD jockey didn't suit me very well," he says.

Back in Vermont, Smith got a job working at the Burlington nonprofit ReSource, which, among other things, recycles and repurposes waste construction materials. He eventually took over as woodshop supervisor in ReSource's "Waste-Not Products" division, which transforms salvaged materials into consumer goods such as benches, tables, bedframes, picture frames and cutting boards.

"I'd see all this stuff that would come through there and think of all these things I could do with them," Smith recalls. Five years ago, he began applying that eye for resource recovery to building furniture pieces of his own design. Today, he and Lawrence say they aim to keep their products within the financial reach of average Vermonters.

Assuming, of course, shoppers can find something at Range Canal Market that hasn't already been sold. Currently the store has a two-to-three-week wait for new pieces. Fresh to treasure, indeed. ☐

I TAKE A COOL THING AND MAKE IT AN AWESOME THING.

JEREMY SMITH

a-kind furnishings. Though only a month of their current business comes from the upcycled furniture, Smith says, the couple expects the original pieces will eventually contribute half the store's revenues.

Not far from the bar table, Smith shows off a wooden bench he built from a Douglas fir beam salvaged in Stowe. The couple partially sanded the beam, but left some of the natural wood untouched. Then they mounted it on cast-iron legs repurposed from old schoolhouse desks.

Smith explains that school desks themselves aren't terribly popular outside those days, typically, the desk surfaces are too angled to work well as, say, end tables. However, their ornate cast-iron legs are highly desirable as supports for other furniture.

Smith's laid-back and customer-focused nature belies an industrious lifestyle. He and Lawrence work at their store seven days a week, then come home and build furniture in their garage on Shulbass Road at night.

Yet Smith sounds relaxed as he



By Christopher Smith

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Closet Case

Saying good-bye to skeletons and hello to bare bones

BY NANCY STEARNS BERCAU

I can now open my closet with a calm sigh instead of a repressed scream. My clothes are lined up like soldiers — trousers in stacks, blouses in formation — guarding against a return to ramshackle racks. I've replaced the swimsuits and T-shirts that had disheveled my shelves with a tidy arrangement of Buddha statues and Panama hats.

I formerly subscribed to the theory that a closet is where things are hidden. Out of sight, out of mind. Don't ask, don't tell. But one day I woke to the realization that everything I despised had found its way in there: the vacuum cleaner, clothes that didn't fit, the FBI file boxes for a murder mystery I'd been working on for years.

Having a disorderly and melancholy closet was also getting expensive. I bought new clothes online because I'd lost track of what I already owned. Clearly, I — and my closet — needed help.

So I called Elizabeth Warren, co-owner of Williston's Vermont Custom Closets, for inspiration and consultation. Her company collaborates with people of various budgets to build or rebuild their closets.

"You go into your closet every day, and it affects your life," Warren told me. "It's not a good way to start your day by crying."

Eager for better days (and hoping to get the task done while my husband was away), I decided it was time to reboot our wardrobe. I put Warren's recommendations to work.



The first step, she instructed, is to take everything out of your closet. I pulled out the file boxes, vacuum cleaner and all our clothes. I found a few long-forgotten treasures in the process, including a pair of pink slippers from Nepal (mine) and a silver Tiffany clock (that had been a present [husband's]).



Then, clean the closet vacuum. It and consider repainting. I wiped down the dusty shelves with a rag, and used the vacuum cleaner to clean the space it had tidily occupied. I didn't need to paint because our house is fairly new. I'm fortunate in that my closet has good "bones," with modest built-ins and a wide, pleasing space. Had it not had those advantages, Warren would have offered a custom system for someone (like me) on a shoestring budget. Although she declared the days of "a red and shelf" long gone, created wire shelving remains an excellent option.



Consider lighting, even a battery-operated light if your closet has none. I was grateful for the simple lighting in my closet — until Warren told me how some ex-suites have chandeliers hanging in the master closet. I decided instead to add cheap (but to my wardrobe, basic) built-in natural-silk ring that I found in another closet.



YOU GO INTO YOUR CLOSET EVERY DAY, AND IT AFFECTS YOUR LIFE.

ELIZABETH WARREN,
VERMONT CUSTOM CLOSETS





GET ORGANIZED



Before you put things back in the closet, consider editing.

If you haven't worn a piece of clothing in a year, if it's the wrong size or is very out of fashion, get rid of it. I was ruthless on this point, even letting go of a pretty sarong from Malaysia because it met all the criteria for disposal. I discovered that I had nine pairs of jeans, four of which I decided to ditch. I also passed on a pair of boots purchased in New York City in 1968 which were last worn six years ago. I noticed that my husband had remarkably few things in our closet.



Make a pile to throw out for consignment and for donation.

I assessed a major heap for Goodwill. I also found a 20-year-old leather suit — no longer suiting my 46-year-old body — that will make its way to a consignment shop. My remainder story boxes were relegated to the basement, where they can rest in peace alongside photos of long dead relatives.



Finally, arrange clothes by type — pants, blouses, jackets, dresses — and even by color. I did this for my stuff as well as for my spouse's spare belongings. I decided to use white plastic hangers for my clothes and black plastic hangers for his. I seized the opportunity to exclaim out loud, "No more wire hangers!"

The mantra at Vermont Custom Closets is "a place for everything," because much of what we stuff into our closets doesn't belong there. At some point, most of us

need a makeover to maximize space and create a more calming experience. I certainly did. But from now on, my closet will show off my style, taste and travels, not my skeletons. ☺



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Mortgage Mojo

"Qualifying" questions for loan officer Anita Lotto

BY PAMELA POLSTON

Anita Lotto is a senior loan officer with Colchester-based Mortgage Financial, where she's worked for 17 years. Previously a Realtor with a way-too-heckin' schedule, Lotto got into the mortgage business 22 years ago when she had young children.



"The mortgage world has provided me flexibility that is the envy of many nine-to-five workers and real estate professionals," she says. "Now that my children are adults, it gives me more time to spend on all of my personal and professional interests."

Lotto, 56, grew up in a large family in Minneapolis and is clearly a people person. She loves helping others "work through the craziness that mortgage financing has become," she says. "It is so rewarding to be at that closing table with new homeowners."

Next, we asked Lotto about getting to that table.

What do you see as the biggest misperception new homebuyers have when they start looking for a mortgage?

That just because their friends did something, they can do it, too. I've

never met two folks with the same financial situation, so each borrower needs to be treated individually. My job is to fit them into the best financing program for their situation.

Is there a recommended percentage of house cost that a homebuyer should be able to put down? In a perfect world, it is 20 percent, but there are many, many programs out there for much less. Five percent down is very common, and there are even zero-percent-down programs if the borrower qualifies.

Do I need perfect credit to get a mortgage?

I want to say yes as everyone strives for perfect credit! However, if you have stayed on top of your credit in the last 12 to 24 months, you should be in OK shape. I strongly suggest if you are even thinking about buying a home in the next six months, to come and see someone like myself to get your credit reviewed and learn the

other strange things we now have to document.

Are there common misunderstandings people have about credit or mistakes?

The biggest one is transferring all their credit card debt to one card. They end up missing out on the benefit and closing the cards they transferred it from. They just took the established credit from those existing cards out of the credit score calculation and moved onto a brand-new card that has no credit history. This will cause your credit score to drop like a stone!

I presume a loan officer will help me find the type of mortgage that's right for me—but are there types that homebuyers should avoid?

Adjustable rates and interest-only loans are good options for a select few, but most folks like to stay in fixed-rate mortgages. For most, knowing that their payment won't go to change is key to their financial well-being.

Is it harder for people now to get home loans than, say, in 2008 or during the recession?

Yes! But, you know, it's good in many ways. It got too easy for people who really couldn't handle a mortgage to get one. Now, of course, we have along the way where some of the guidelines are a bit reduction. We

hope that as more loans continue to perform well, things will lighten up on the underwriting end.

What documents do I need to bring with me when I apply for a mortgage?

One month of current pay stubs, W-2s for the last two years, federal income taxes for the last two years if you are self-employed, two most current months of bank statements, and a photo ID.

What are the costs involved in the mortgage process?

We ask for the application fee (to pay for the appraisal), all other funds are collected at closing. If you chose to do a property inspection, you will pay that at the time of inspection.

Do I need private mortgage insurance for my loan?

If you don't put 20 percent down, you will be required to pay some type of mortgage insurance.

Any last words?

I would add that folks really need to get prequalified as soon as they are thinking about buying a home... At the pre-qual meeting, we lay it all out so they know what will be coming at them. Even borrowers who can't buy now receive a road map of what they need to do to be able to buy in the future. ☺

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CHARLIE MCCLINTOCK BE SEES THE BACKYARD, AROUND THE OVEN ONLY, CONSTRUCTED AND BUILT.

Charlie McClintock's backyard in Burlington's Old North End abounds in quirky trappings that make the most of his limited acreage. He's lived in the city for decades, but that hasn't stopped him from working the land and inviting his guests to enjoy the outdoors.

McClintock's modestly sized yard on Russell Street currently has a small permaculture operation, a covered patio area with a driftwood sculpture garden and a greenhouse — all projects that only a dedicated student of urban agriculture would undertake. Among these long-term works in progress is a brand-new addition: a handcrafted, brick-domed earth oven that he plans to fire up this summer for outdoor pizza parties.

McClintock prides himself on being a do-it-yourself kind of guy, but that oven was made for him by a buddy: Mark Krawczyk. A woodworker, owner of permaculture design and consulting business Keyhole Vermont, and an earth oven expert, Krawczyk is currently building his own home on a recently purchased parcel of pasture and woodland in New Haven.

"That oven wouldn't be there without Mark's generous help and expertise," McClintock says, "because I tried [building it] and it was a total failure."

Krawczyk teaches earth oven courses at Vermonters' Design (Burlington), the sustainable-building school in Westfield, and leads workshops at local public schools and colleges. He built McClintock's oven as the hands-on component of a workshop he was teaching to a group of Burlington College students. And, despite his friends' professed difficulties, Krawczyk believes anyone can build one. You just need the right materials — which cost no more than a few hundred dollars, he says — and patience.

"The first oven I did was back in 2001," Krawczyk remembers. "It's embarrassing, the first one that I built in my parents' backyard in Milwaukie! As crappy as it was, it lasted 10 years."

Krawczyk has since honed his craft. He says the first thing a builder needs for a successful earth oven is a **SOLID FOUNDATION**, which can be made from stone or another non-combustible material. "People tend to want to sleep on the foundation — they just want the oven," Krawczyk notes. "But the foundation offers drainage and decent protection against the frost heave."

ELEVATING THE OVEN (4) also protects it against "updraft," or airflows from the ground that would cause its walls to disintegrate. Not least, having a raised oven means convenience: "Nobody wants to be lying on the ground checking to see if the pizza's done," Krawczyk points out.

The next step is constructing some kind of **ROOF TO PROTECT THE OVEN**. "People always ask, 'Can I get away with not building a roof?' And you can, but you're going to have to rebuild your oven, because it's built out of earth, and it'll happily [if protected and maintained]," Krawczyk instructs, "it'll last a really long time, but it takes some maintenance."

The roof can range from a simple tarp to an elaborate structure that also shields guests from the elements.

Once the roof and the foundation are in place, the builder can turn his or her attention to the oven itself. Krawczyk suggests **LAYING A HEARTH OF FIREBRICK** (2), a kind of ceramic material, typically gray or cream-colored, that is used to line kilns and fireplace flues. For backyard ovens, Krawczyk recommends a hearth with a 36-inch diameter.

Then, **CREATE A DOME OF SAND** (3) atop the hearth. Basically, you sculpt the sand," Krawczyk explains. "You sculpt the hollow that will be the oven itself out of sand." After the dome, layer four inches of a clay-and-sand "cobble" mixture. "You won't get enough clay to build it all. If you have too much clay, there'll be more cracking. If you don't have enough clay, it's not going to hold together. It's going to crumble," he stresses.

AN OPENING SHOULD BE MADE AT this stage, Krawczyk likes to use brick arches. The sand from the dome will be scooped out through the opening once it dries.

The final step is **PROTECTING THE EARTH OVEN FROM THE ELEMENTS** (4). Krawczyk recommends clay "slip," a liquid mixture that includes either perlite or vermiculite. Then a layer of plaster should be applied — not concrete, he stresses, which will trap moisture from baking and cause the oven to deteriorate over time.

Krawczyk says that building the oven "is something that's easy to complete in a weekend." But then — and here's where the patience comes in — you have to **LET THE OVEN DRY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS**. This might be a good time to work on your pizza recipes.

When the oven is fully dried, **SCORP OUT THE SAND** and warm up the oven with a few test fires before baking your first pie.

McClintock, for his part, plans to host his first outdoor party when summer kicks in. He says he can't wait for guests to sit on the stone patio, gaze at the sculpture garden and indulge in wood-fired pizzas from his oven. □

How to make a backyard earth oven

BY KIAN CHIANG-WARDEN



Earth oven expert and instructor Mark Krawczyk of Keyhole Vermont.



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